



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

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On the web at: www.usdoj.gov/usao/twx/index.html

**CASTILLION DRUG ORGANIZATION SUPERVISOR
SENTENCED TO LIFE IN FEDERAL PRISON**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that this afternoon 34-year-old Jesse Salazar Ramirez of San Antonio, a supervisor in the Alejandro Noe Castillion drug organization based in Eagle Pass, TX, was sentenced to life in federal prison for distributing over 3,100 pounds of cocaine.

On February 24, 2004, a federal jury in San Antonio convicted Ramirez of money laundering, conspiracy to distribute cocaine and two counts of possession with intent to distribute cocaine. The jury found that as a supervisor, Ramirez coordinated the acquisition of cell phones, stash houses, vehicles and firearms in order to carry out the organization's mission. In sentencing Ramirez, U. S. Circuit Court Judge Edward C. Prado found that during trial, Ramirez threatened a witness, provided perjured testimony and attempted to intimidate by threats a federal prosecutor.

In November 2002, a federal grand jury returned an indictment against 15 members of the Castillion drug organization. After smuggling cocaine from Mexico into Eagle Pass, members of the organization would transport the cocaine in hidden compartments inside vehicles to stash houses in San Antonio. From San Antonio, the cocaine was distributed to various locations around the country, including Dallas, TX; Houston, TX; Milwaukee, WI; Chicago, IL; New York, NY; Columbus, OH; and Kansas City, MO. Drug ledgers seized in the case documented the distribution of more than 3,100 pounds of cocaine at a value of more than \$22 million from the summer of 2001 through the fall of 2002. Authorities seized approximately 265 pounds of cocaine, \$521,650 in cash, 16 assault rifles, two machine guns, 11 handguns and 25 vehicles.

Ramirez was the only defendant in this case to go to trial. The other fourteen defendants— including the leader of the organization, Alejandro Noe Castillion—entered guilty pleas. Their sentences, issued by Judge Prado, range from 235 months incarceration to probation.

"Today's sentence of life in federal prison for Jesse Salazar Ramirez marks the end of the line for a major drug trafficker and the final chapter for this very sophisticated and large-scale drug distribution operation. Illegal drugs wreck the lives of so many Americans and the cost to our country is enormous. These drug dealers who prey on our young people by selling their poison in our communities must be confronted and stopped," stated U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton. "I commend the diligence and teamwork of federal, state and local law enforcement officers, and for their commitment to seeing that these defendants were brought to Justice."

— more —

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This investigation was conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Texas Department of Public Safety Narcotics, Immigration and Naturalization Service, San Antonio Police Department, Schertz Police Department, Alamo Area Narcotics Task Force, Eagle Pass Police Department, Maverick County Sheriff's Office, Guadalupe County Sheriff's Office, Bexar County Constable – Precinct 4 and the Bexar County District Attorney's Office. Assistant United States Attorney Joey Contreras prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

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